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Tertullian then proceeds to enumerate some ceremonial usages of the Church, as not being taught or prescribed by Scripture, or Divine revelation, and among them "oblations for the dead, for their birth-days to heaven, on the anniversary day." Or, as Mr. Search gives it, oblations for the dead on the anniversary day; and Mr. Duffy—"We make yearly oblations for the dead." Tertullian then concludes with these words—"If for these, and other such like regulations, you demand the law of the SCRIPTURES, none can be found, (*si legem exposuerimus Scripturarum, nullam inveneris*). Tradition will be held up before you as originating, usage as confirming, and faith as practising them."

Now, it must be observed that Roman Catholics have also quoted this first passage in proof of the antiquity of Roman Catholic "masses." Modern Roman oblations for the dead, and masses for the dead, are almost inseparable; and it is now, also, produced as proof, that the doctrine of Purgatory was believed in the 3rd century. I ask Mr. Search and other Romanists, lay and clerical, whether they are ready to stand by the testimony of Tertullian—namely, that there is no warranty in Scripture for their doctrines of Purgatory and masses, and prayers for the dead? I do not think they will dare to make so wide an admission; and if not, they must entirely renounce the testimony of Tertullian. It may not be amiss to notice, that when Tertullian is talking of a matter of *faith*, as necessary to be believed, he uses a very different strain; here he makes a direct appeal to *SCRIPTURE*, and rejects all other authority. He "adores the fulness of Scripture." "Whether all things were made of any subject matter, I have as yet read nowhere. Let those of Hermogenes' shop show that it is written; if it be not written, let them fear that woe which is allotted to such as add or take away."* We now can appreciate the value of the omission of the words which refer to the Scriptures in the first part of the quotation.

With this second rebuke Mr. Search will be a little more careful before he quotes, second hand, from books of which personally he seems to know nothing, and I trust Mr. Duffy also will profit by the lesson.

II. I now come to the second part of the first passage quoted.

I cannot discover from whence Mr. Duffy borrows; but Mr. Search adopts the translation given by Kirk and Berrington—"We have oblations for the dead on the anniversary day." I now accuse Mr. Search of another serious omission. I have given above the proper translation—"We make oblations for their birth-days to heaven on the anniversary days." The original passage is—"Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitatis, annua die facimus."

To understand the meaning of this passage, a few words of explanation will be necessary. I hope to make it clear, that the *oblation* referred to was not the modern sacrifice of the mass, nor was it offered for souls in Purgatory. Martyrdom, among the early Christians was considered a passport to heaven. The persecutors, we read in Eusebius' history, endeavoured to destroy all traces even of their dead bodies, to prevent the survivors giving them burial; but what could be saved were honourably interred by the Christians, who, adopting the old Greek custom, celebrated their memory about their tombs, to encourage the survivors to fortitude and perseverance. We then read of the *anniversary festivals*, or commemorations of the day on which martyrs suffered, called the *days of Nativity*, as they were on that day born to a new life. By reason of the great persecutions these meetings became very frequent. At these assemblies prayers were offered up and thanksgivings that the martyrs had gained a victory, their names were rehearsed, the eucharist celebrated, almsgivings, which were afterwards called *oblations*, were then made to the poor. These alms were made in fruits, corn, wine, &c. That these *oblations* were doles or gifts only in kind is evident from the explanation given in the canons of the councils of Carthage and Vaison.† A simple narrative is given in the Epist. Smyrn.—"We can never abandon Christ nor serve another; we adore Christ as the Son of God, and we cherish the martyrs as the disciples and followers of our Lord; we solemnize the day of their nativity, which is the day of their death, in remembrance of such as have confected for the truth, and in order to the exercising and exciting others to imitate their example. We hope to be made capable of the like graces, and, at last, copartners and fellow-sharers in the same glory." There is also a very remarkable passage in one of the books attributed to Origen—"Let us observe, O friends, what a change has taken place in men. For the ancients (Greeks) celebrated the natal day, loving one life, and not hoping another after this. But now we do not celebrate the natal day, because it is a beginning of gifts and temptations; but we celebrate the day of death, inasmuch as it is a laying aside of all gifts, and an escape from all temptations. We celebrate the day of death, because those die not who seem to

die. Wherefore, we both observe the memorials of the saints, and devoutly keep the remembrance of our parents and friends which die in the faith; as well rejoicing for their refreshing [which cannot be in Purgatory] as requesting also for ourselves a godly communion in the faith. Thus, therefore, we do not celebrate the day of birth; because they which die shall live for ever, and we celebrate it, calling together the religious persons with the priests, the faithful with the clergy; inviting, moreover, the needy and the poor, feeding the orphans and widows, that our festivity may be for a MEMORIAL OF REST to the souls departed (ut flat festivitas nostra in memoriam requiei defunctis animabus, quorum memoria celebramus) whose memory we celebrate, and to us may become a sweet savour in the sight of the eternal God."

That these commemorations and oblations were offered for, or in memory of martyrs, then actually enjoying eternal happiness, is evident from the writings of Cyprian, who professed himself to be a pupil of Tertullian, and a great admirer of his writings.†

Referring to certain martyrs, Cyprian says—"Finally, also, take note of the days on which they depart from life, that we may be able to celebrate their commemoration among the anniversaries of the martyrs: although Tertullian, our most faithful and most beloved brother, according to the usual anxiety and care which he shows to the brethren in every kindness and labour of love . . . has written, and does write, and signify to me the days on which in prison, OUR HAPPY BRETHREN, by issue of a glorious death, PASS TO IMMORTALITY; and oblations and sacrifices are here celebrated by us, on account of their commemorations, which we shall speedily hold in company with you, the Lord being our protector." (‡)

In the 37th Ep., p. 73 (edit. as before), he says—"Sufficiently blessed are those of you, who, journeying by these footstep of glory, have already departed from life; and the path of virtue and faith having been completed, have arrived AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (ad complexum et osculum Domini), the Lord himself rejoicing."

Ep. xi. p. 23.—"Torments which do not readily dismiss to a crown, but torture until they overthrow; unless that some one, rescued by the Divine majesty, should expire amidst the very torments, having obtained glory, not by termination of punishment, but by the quickness of dying." Again, in the 31st Ep. p. 62, he talks of others dying "confessing Christ." "The world having been abandoned, to have sought heaven—men having left to stand among angels—and all secular hindrances having been burst asunder, now to be placed, liberated, in the presence of God, to hold fast WITHOUT ANY DELAY a heavenly kingdom."

From passages such as these, which might be multiplied, we can at once comprehend the meaning of Tertullian's words, when he speaks of oblations for the dead, on these anniversary days of commemoration.

According to the modern Roman doctrine, *all* the faithful—all those who die in the faith of Christ—go to Purgatory, before they can be in a fit condition to appear before God; and the Trent Catechism distinctly asserts this imaginary receptacle to be a place of suffering, and which Bellarmine, and a host of writers, describe to be of a most horrible nature. This modern Purgatory, therefore, could not be the place where the martyrs, &c., named by Tertullian and Cyprian, and others, were consigned, when they offered up their "oblations" on the anniversary days of their death, as they evidently believed them to be in happiness. Cyprian even expressly states them to be in the presence of their Lord.

The second part of this first quotation in question I have translated—"We make oblation for the dead, for their birth day to heaven, on the anniversary day." Mr. Search has omitted to translate the word "pro natalitatis," which omission destroys the true sense of the phrase, "oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitatis, annua die facimus." In adopting the translation of *natalitatis*, "for their birth-day to heaven," I only follow authorities of his own church. De la Cerdia, the Jesuit, on this passage, says—"By *natalitia* Tertullian means the days on which Saints, dead to the world, are born to heaven."§ And another Roman Catholic, Priorius, says—"By *natalitia* Tertullian means the solemnities accustomed to be held in honour of martyrs, on the day on which, being dead to the world, they were born to heaven. From whence we make oblations on the annual day—that is, yearly."||

The omission of the word *natalitia* (if intentional) is most obvious; for its appearance in the proper place clears the passage of all difficulties. Thus, then, we now come to the truth—*first*, that the ceremony spoken of is not warranted by Scripture, which we discover not from Mr. Search's version of it, but by consulting

* Orig. Oper. Studio Erasmi, Basil, 1536, tom. I. p. 500, ex. of Froben. —Lib. iii., comment. in Job.)

† See Jerome, vol. iv., pt. ii. p. 115, edit. 1684.

‡ Ep. xii. edit. Oxon. 1682, p. 27. Tom. ii.

§ Tertullianus intelligit per *natalitia* dies, quibus sancti, mundo mortali nascuntur casio. De la Cerdia e soc. Jesu; in loc. Tert. Op. Paris, 1624, p. 657.

|| Prior, in loc. Tert. Oper. Rig. et Prior. Annotat. adject. Lutet. 1684, p. 102.

the original text; and, *secondly*, that the ceremony itself had no reference whatever to the doctrine of Purgatory, the truth of which also becomes apparent by the substitution of a word also omitted or suppressed by Mr. Search, as also by Mr. Duffy.

III. I observe that the word "apostolical" prefixed to "tradition," is a gratuitous addition made by Mr. Search or his adviser. The word does not appear in the original, and is unwarrantably foisted in, for very obvious reasons.

Thus, then, in the quotation of two lines and a half, we have two serious omissions and one interpolation, all apparently intentional, and inconsistent with that accuracy and good faith which should be scrupulously observed in religious controversies.

With your permission I will take the second quotation another time.*

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
C. H. COLLETTÉ.
London, 2nd May, 1854.

ON INFALLIBILITY.

We have received a long communication from our respected correspondent, Mr. Rourke. He finds it hard when his pen is set going to get it to stop; however, he has kindly divided his communication into three portions, each of reasonable length. We strongly recommend his example, in this respect, for imitation by our other correspondents. We can often find room for a short letter, when a long one is obliged to stand over, month after month, from the mechanical difficulty of making room for it without displacing other more pressing matter. And a correspondent, thus dividing his letter, will not injure his chance of seeing both parts appear in the same number, should the state of our columns admit it.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Accept my sincere thanks for your kindness in inserting my long letters, on the infallibility of the Church of Christ, in your widely-circulated journal. I beg leave to send you another letter on the same interesting subject; but it will be a short one, as I will not, for the future, "disregard your request to be brief." I most earnestly and affectionately call the attention of your truth-seeking readers to the following passages from the Sacred Volume, which invincibly and irrefragably prove the infallibility of Christ's Church. But, before I open the Holy Book, will you permit me to say that I did not, in my last letter, charge you with wilful blindness, as you declare. My meaning was that, as the Jews reading the Old Testament, by reason of their blindness, cannot see Christ in the Scriptures, but shall, when they believe in him, and have the cover removed, perceive all to be most plainly done, and spoken of him in their law and Scriptures; even so the opponents of the Church of Christ, having a far greater cover of blindness and incredulity over their hearts, in respect of the Catholic Church, which they impugn, than the Jews have concerning Christ, cannot see, though they read, or hear the Scriptures read, ever so much, the marvellous evidence of the Catholic Church and truth in all points; but when they shall return again to the obedience of the same Church, they shall find the Scriptures most clear for her and her doctrines, and shall wonder at their former blindness.

Here follow the passages above alluded to:—"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee (the Church), nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord, and their justice with me, saith the Lord."—Is. liv. 9, 10, 13, 14, 17.

Our Lord again says—"I, the Lord, do keep it (the Church), I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."—Isai. xxvii. 8. These are passages, sir, which, as I have said in the preface, irreducibly prove the infallibility of the Church of Christ. How, you must tell your readers, can she err if the Lord cannot be angry with her, if she is founded in righteousness, if her children are taught of the Lord, if his covenant cannot be removed from her, and if he keeps and waters her continually with heavenly truth?

Again, St. Paul says—"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed."—Gal. i. 8. Now, I ask, whether the Apostle did not here claim an infallibility in what he had preached? whether in these words he allowed the Galatians to believe that he had been under a mistake? or whether it be not plain that he demanded an entire submission to the doctrine he had taught them? and how far, then, was St. Paul from encouraging the private judgment of any man to

* Your correspondents may now consult "Pope's Roman Misquotations," which will enlighten them further on the subject. London, 1840.

* Adoro Scriptura plenitudinem.—Tert. Adv. Hermog. cap. 22, Edit. Rothom. 1682, p. 417. "An autem de aliqua subjacenti materia facta sint omnia, nusquam adhuc legi. Scriptum esse doceat Hermogenes officina. Si non est Scriptum, timeat vae illud adjicentibus aut detrahentibus destinatum."—Ibid. Ibid. See Edt. Paris, 1654, p. 247.

† See Scultet. Med. Thesis. Patrum. Amb. 1603, p. 307.

control his decisions, since he would not allow it even to an angel from heaven, but pronounced those accursed that should pretend to reform the doctrine he had preached?

Common sense tells us, sir, that without subordination there can be nothing but confusion in either Church or State, and that without an authority which all are bound to acknowledge there can be no subordination—that shaking off the yoke of authority to become one's own guide in the affair of religion, must tend to pride, to obstinacy, and to every species of religious phrensy;—that those famous heresies, which have from time to time distrusted the Christian world, have all arisen from this want of submission;—that it is the essential character of every heresy to be maintained in opposition to the Church's authority;—which gave St. Augustine occasion to say that he might indeed err, but would not be a heretic; meaning that he was secured from heresy by his disposition of ready obedience to the Church. Common sense tells us that the bulk of mankind, through their ignorance, their weakness of understanding, and their several avocations, being incapable of examining the Scriptures, or of judging for themselves, must unavoidably rely upon authority. From these motives of plain reason the Roman Catholic is sufficiently convinced that to be guided by authority is his indispensable duty; if it be his duty, it is, therefore, what God requires of him; and surely by doing what God requires of him, he cannot go astray. Thus, even, without any help from Scripture, the Roman Catholic is assured he cannot be misled by following the authority of the Church.

But he who differs from the Roman Catholic Church has every reason to fear being led astray, by interpreting the Scripture according to his own opinion and judgment, when he considers that to be mistaken in opinion is what daily happens to thousands and thousands in other matters less difficult than those of religion. Is not this even what he himself must say of all those who, following their own opinion as he does, yet differ from him? Is it not even the nature of man to be liable to error of judgment? And what privilege can he plead to be exempt from the common lot of mankind? Is it that he seeks the truth with more candour and sincerity than others do? Such a notion, however he may flatter himself with it, must appear presumption and folly in the eyes of others. Moreover, by persuading himself he cannot go astray in his own interpretation of Scripture, he assumes to himself that infallibility he denies to the Roman Catholic Church. Besides all this, he has to encounter against the certainty of his opinion an argument which cannot possibly fail to make the deepest impression on any unbiased mind. I mean that the sense he gives the Scripture is contrary to the sense in which it is understood by all the wise and learned men the Roman Catholic Church comprised within its pale, and contrary to what is acknowledged to have been believed by all Christendom, at least for several ages. If, after all this, he persists in saying that he is sure he is right in following his own opinion and judgment, we can only beseech God to give him what Solomon begged of the Almighty for himself—that is, a docile heart. But it is sufficiently plain to whoever is open to conviction, that he has no just cause to be assured he is not mistaken in his opinion, and of course that he has no reasonable grounds of certainty with regard to his faith.

To sum up all in a word—faith is, of its own nature, certain and infallible. Opinion is not. Whatever persuasion, therefore, is built on opinion, cannot be faith. Hence, there can be no true or real faith but what is grounded on authority—that is, not only the authority of God revealing (which all sects pretend to), but also the authority of the Church, as the only sure channel through which the sense of revelation is conveyed to us.

As this letter is comparatively short, the “temptation to skip” cannot be very strong for your readers. You will soon hear from me again.

I remain, sir,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM ROURKE.

Passage East, June, 1854.

With regard to Mr. Rourke's preliminary remarks, we have to say, that we know it is quite true that the interpretation put on the Bible by a member of the Church of Rome, is quite different from that put on it by any one else. And the reason is plain enough. A member of the Church of England reads the Bible with no other object than to learn what Scripture teaches, and to govern his belief by it. A member of the Church of Rome only gets leave to read the Bible on condition that he will find in it the doctrines of his Church; he opens the Scriptures, not to seek for truth, but to look out for arguments to defend the opinions which he has been taught that he must on no account question; and so it is no wonder if the interpretation he puts on texts be very different from what any one else would pronounce to be the plain meaning of them.

Mr. Rourke's first Scripture argument is taken from the prophecies addressed by Isaiah to the Jews; and it would, at first sight, appear, that if it proved the infallibility of any Church at all, it would prove the infallibility of the Jewish Church. If a Jew, however, were to endeavour to maintain, by the help of this text, that his Church was right in rejecting our Lord for their Messiah, Mr. Rourke, no doubt, would answer, that the text was a prophecy,

which had not been fulfilled in the time of our Lord, seven hundred years after the prophecy was delivered. Well, we want to know, has this prophecy yet received its complete fulfilment. We know that the Church of Christ is to exist hereafter in a glorious and triumphant state, and that there are many prophecies which describe her as she shall be in that state. Mr. Rourke seems to forget this entirely; and applies to the Church, in her present state, every prophecy which he finds about her. Mr. Rourke (we have no doubt, without any designed unfairness) leaves out two verses in the middle of his quotation, which yet would greatly assist us in forming an opinion which state of the Church the prophet is speaking of:—“I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of precious stones. And all thy children shall be taught of God,” &c. Now, let our readers open the 21st chapter of the book of Apocalypse, and see whether the time the prophet refers to is not that still future time, spoken of also by the writer of the Apocalypse.

No doubt, the prophecy receives, even now, a partial fulfilment; no doubt, still whatever spiritual knowledge the children of God receive, they are taught of God; but their full measure of light and purity is, doubtless, still future. The inapplicability of these prophecies of Isaiah to the present state of the Roman Catholic Church is still more apparent from other parts of the same prophecy, which are also omitted by Mr. Rourke, but which were brought forward by a former correspondent, who cited the same text from Isaiah.—Vol. I., p. 130. “INIQUITY shall be no more heard in thy land, waste and destruction in thy borders; and salvation shall occupy thy walls, and praise thy gates.”—Is. ix., 18. Is Rome without *iniquity*? Have not many successive Popes, by the confession of her own historians, been monsters of iniquity?

Again—“The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”—Is. ix., 20.

Compare this with the letter of Pope Pius IX., dated 21st November, 1851:—“In the midst of the incessant and painful solicitudes with which the *calamity of the times overwhelms us* . . . it is for us no slight subject of sorrow, to behold what a *sad and lamentable spectacle is presented by our holy religion and civil society in these calamitous times*.”

Is not this sufficient to show that these prophecies of Isaiah have not found their complete fulfilment in the present times, but that they relate to that state of the New Jerusalem, spoken of in Apocalypse xxi., to which we have already referred, when “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away.”

Mr. Rourke next quotes a text, on which Protestants are accustomed to rely, as a very strong argument on their side—“Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed.”—Gal. i. 8. This proves, decisively, that the doctrine taught by St. Paul was infallibly true; but it certainly proves nothing for the infallibility of the Church of Rome. Accordingly, we accept, as infallible authority to govern our belief, the writings of St. Paul and the other Apostles and Evangelists; and when we find the Gospel taught by them differing very materially from that taught by the Church of Rome, this text is one, among others, why we reject her claims to our submission, and why we rather fear that she has brought herself under the curse denounced upon those who substitute another Gospel for that preached by the Apostle.

Next, after his arguments from Scripture, Mr. Rourke proceeds to prove, from common sense, the necessity and the duty of submission to authority. We are no foes to authority; we inculcate the duty of submitting to authority—children to that of their parents, subjects to rulers, pupils to schoolmasters, private Christians to their spiritual teachers, &c. But there is only one authority which must be submitted to implicitly, at all times and under every circumstance—the authority of God himself. All human authority, being exercised by men liable to error, may exceed its bounds, and may require to be occasionally resisted. If Mr. Rourke's argument were good, the Mahometan and the Hindoo might, with equal force, conclude, “that to be guided by authority is their indispensable duty; that being their duty, God must require it of them; and that doing what God required, they could not possibly go astray.” And they would, on Mr. Rourke's principles, be fully justified in refusing to give a hearing to the Christian missionaries who should call on them to question the authority of the religious guides to whom they had from their childhood submitted themselves. We can see, then, that a man who should implicitly submit to authority, without taking due pains to assure himself that that authority is Divine, is not only not free from the danger of being misled, but is taking the very most likely means of running into error.

It follows, then, that Mr. Rourke is very much mistaken as to the greater certainty with which he imagines his method to be attended. Mr. Rourke is obliged to follow his own opinion and judgment as well as ourselves. He uses his private judgment, once for all, in selecting an authority to submit to, and then shuts his eyes, and follows blindly. Protestants submit to authority also; but

they do so with their eyes open, constantly taking pains to assure themselves that the claims of their guide are well founded, and that his directions are reasonable and consistent. Which is most likely to be mistaken? How important is it that Mr. Rourke should not be mistaken in the one exercise of private judgment which he makes.

Faith, it is true, *in God* is certain and infallible; but faith in any human authority is not. We may be quite sure, that whatever God has revealed must be true; but as to what any human authority teaches, our certainty can never rise any higher than whatever certainty there may be that God has commissioned that authority. Mr. Rourke's certainty can, therefore, never rise any higher than whatever probability there may be for the truth of this one proposition to which his private judgment has led him—viz., that the Church of Rome is infallible.

We beg of him, then, to examine the truth of this proposition with all the care which its importance deserves. We borrow Mr. Rourke's own words, and apply them to himself.

May he not be mistaken in this opinion? Does it not happen to thousands to be mistaken in their opinion in questions far less difficult? Is it not the nature of men to be liable to error of judgment? What privilege can he plead to be exempt from the common lot of mankind? Is it that he seeks the truth with more candour and sincerity than others do? By persuading himself that he cannot go wrong in his choice of a Church, he claims for himself individually that infallibility which his Church denies to all but herself. Besides, he must remember, that this opinion of his—that the Church of Rome is infallible—is contrary to the conviction of all the wise and learned men who are outside the pale of that Church, and contrary to the opinion of Christendom for several ages, and to that of more than half of Christendom at the present day.

Of a number of travellers through a difficult country, half endeavoured to direct their steps by the aid of a trustworthy map; half submitted themselves to the conduct of the first guide who offered himself. And while these last bragged of the greater ease and certainty of their method, how were their brethren distressed to find that the path along which this guide confidently led them was plainly marked on the map as leading to precipices and other dangers. How they would try to persuade them that their certainty of being safe could never be higher than whatever certainty there was that their guide was a safe one, and that this probability could not be high, when they disregarded the directions of the map whose authority they all acknowledged.

It is with such feelings as these that we appeal to Mr. Rourke. We respect him as a sincere and candid inquirer after truth. He has occupied our pages, not with vulgar abuse, but with a fair attempt to prove his religion by arguments, and he has taken with good humour our remonstrances when we thought him occasionally too lengthy. It is, therefore, with pain that we see one false assumption at the bottom of his whole system. We do not feel more certain of any proposition in Euclid than we are of the fact that the Church of Rome not only *may* err, but *has* erred in several important points. We, therefore, are earnest in our request to Mr. Rourke to weigh well the grounds on which he submits himself to her. Can nothing better be said for her than the mere general assertion, that in human matters we are obliged (with due caution) to avail ourselves of the guidance of authority? or that God has promised that a time shall come when his Church shall be free from sin and error?

MUST THE DIVINELY-AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS OF A REVELATION BE NECESSARILY INFALLIBLE?

SIR—I see that your correspondent, Mr. Rourke, in common with most of the Romish controversialists, takes it for granted that those whom God appoints to teach the meaning of the Bible must, of necessity, be secured from error. But it is strange that the case of the Jewish clergy does not occur to Mr. Rourke and others; and cause them to pause.

Had not the Jewish Church a revelation, even the Old Testament? Had not the Jews a clergy to teach them the meaning of Scripture; whose lips, Malachi says, should keep knowledge, whilst the law was to be sought at their mouth? Were the Jewish clergy, or were they not, infallible in exercising their office of interpreting Scripture? If they were infallible, what becomes of Christ's pretensions? If not infallible, what of the *a priori* argument that the Divinely-authorized interpreters of a revelation must necessarily be secured from possibility of error?

Of course Mr. Rourke may say, though without the shadow of proof, that the Jewish clergy had forfeited their previously enjoyed attribute of infallibility before they condemned our Lord. But how could they have justly forfeited it? Not certainly by false teaching, for that must *follow* and not *cause* the loss of infallibility. How, then, except by want of humility, or zeal in holding fast the truth, or by some other fault of temper, or living? But, having lost infallibility, were they, or were they not, still the priests of God's Church? That they were no longer the priests of God at our Saviour's time, will not, I am sure, be pretended. (See John xi., 51). If they retained their office, then have we an instance of a fallible clergy divinely authorized to expound revelation. And, further, if the Jewish